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### **Biden Requests Funding to Fight Child Abuse**

Dover – Delaware Attorney General Beau Biden asked the legislature's budget-writing committee today to approve funding for training 10,000 adults to recognize the signs of child abuse and report it to authorities.

Biden made his request for \$60,000 for the Stewards of Children program during the Department of Justice's annual Joint Finance Committee hearing. The funding, if approved, would be included DOJ's budget for fiscal year 2013, which begins July 1.

"It is not a child's job to protect him or herself from abuse, that is our job as adults," Biden said. "We know that one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused, but only one in 10 will report the abuse. When 90 percent of abused kids are victimized by someone they know and trust – someone who says they love them – it falls to the rest of the community to be vigilant, informed, and ready to take action to stop the abuse. Stewards of Children gives us the tools to do just that."

Last year the Department of Justice launched the Stewards of Children program with community groups including Prevent Child Abuse Delaware and YMCA of Delaware. The partnership has a goal to train 35,000 Delawareans, or about five percent of the state's population. Conducted by volunteer facilitators, the training costs of \$6 per person cover the course materials. Since the program launched in Delaware last September, more than 2,000 Delawareans have been trained, including Department of Justice employees, 350 Family Court personnel and more than 100 firefighters and paramedics. At work in 48 states and 10 countries, the Stewards of Children program is designed to teach adults the signs of child sex abuse in order to prevent it and to report suspected incidents. Taught by trained facilitators to the general public, the program is brief, inexpensive, and effective. It highlights facts about abuse, common situations in which it occurs, ways to talk to children and adults about it, and simple and effective protection strategies. Participants report a 38 percent increase in knowledge and attitudes about child sex abuse.

Last November, Biden received the Darkness to Light's Voice of Courage Award for the DOJ's efforts to bring Stewards of Children training to Delaware.

In addition to the Stewards of Children training funds, Biden also asked the JFC to approve funding for critical priorities that include replacing outdated computers, two social workers previously paid for by federal grants, a forensic accountant that will be self-funded, an additional prosecutor for the Securities Unit, and additional funding for extraditions and expert witness fees.

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